

Our Young People

Dr. Duff and Missions in India.

By Woodford.

"Wherever I wander, wherever I stay, my heart is in India, in deep sympathy with its multitudinous inhabitants, and in earnest longing for their highest welfare in time and eternity.

Dr. Duff's latest published words.

No name more fitting than that of Alexander Duff could be coupled with the subject of Missions in India, for he, Burns and Livingstone "are the three mightiest" of the whole band of Scottish worthies whose labours in the fields of heathenism, India, China and Africa respectively, have given lustre to the annals of this century. This noble missionary was born at Moulin, Scotland, and when 15 years of age was sent to St. Andrew's University. His father gave him twenty pounds to begin with; for the rest of his course he worked his own way by means of bursaries and prizes. At the University he came under the influence of Dr. Chalmers, which of itself was a splendid incentive to study. Before the completion of his art course a "Students' Missionary Society" was formed of which Duff was an enthusiastic member. After eight years from the time he entered college he was licensed to preach the Gospel, delivering his first discourse from 1 Cor. 2: 2, in historic St. Giles' church Edinburgh.

The church of Scotland in 1815 had sent as chaplain to Calcutta Rev. J. Boyce, who organized a Scotch church there but made no effort in the way of missionary work among the Hindoos. Not until nine years later and then it was on the suggestion of Ram Mohun Roy, an enlightened Brahman, did Mr. Boyce memorialize the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to begin missionary and educational work in India. In response to his request it was decided to send out one ordained minister and two teachers. The position was offered Duff, but he declined in favor of his friend, John Urquhart, who, while preparing to go, was cut off by death. In the year in which he was licensed Duff accepted the appointment, and on Oct. 14th, 1829, he and his wife sailed from London for India.

Soon after his arrival in India Duff, although opposed by nearly all the other missionaries, commenced the work of teaching. He saw that the false science of the so called sacred books of India was inseparably connected with their religious teaching, and came to the conclusion that the thorough education of the Hindoos would be subversive of the native superstitions. He, therefore, not without the wish of being misunderstood by his committee at home, deliberately adopted what may be called his educational plan. "Give me the school-books and schoolmasters of a country," Duff said, "and I will let any one else not only make its songs, but its literature, science and philosophy too. What has made Brahmanism the hoary power it is but the Shastars? What has sustained the force and passions of Islam for centuries but the Koran read in every college and school from Gibraltar to the Straits of Malacca?" "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God?" said Paul, and believed Duff.

Ram Mohun Roy, who had advised Mr. Boyce to ask the church at home for missionaries, handed over to Duff his institution in which he himself taught, and sat at the new teachers' feet, helping, until his death came in 1843, in every way he could this man who had come over to help them. Good work was done in the college, despite the opposition and denunciation of the orthodox Hindoos.

These years there Duff labored to convert the edu-

cational plans of the Indian government into auxiliaries that might lend their aid to preparing the way for the spread of the gospel. Where a government seminary was founded to demolish idolatry and superstitions there ought also to be a Christian institution to be instrumental in rearing the beauteous structures of Christianity on the ruins of all false philosophy and false religion. Where a government library was placed to satisfy the thirst for knowledge there also there ought to be Depositories for Bibles and other religious publications to salivate the expanding minds of the Indian youth with the life-giving principles of eternal truth. By seizing such opportunities he believed the government schemes of education improvement in India would be overruled by a gracious superintending Providence for the ultimate introduction of Messiah's Kingdom. In these efforts nothing less than intellectually and spiritually to reform the universal mind of India—he had the sympathetic support of Lord Bentinck the governor general, and of such officials as Lord Macaulay and Mr. Trevelyan.

The health of the hard-working missionary broke down in 1831 and he had to return to Scotland. The apathy regarding, and even opposition, to foreign missions fired the soul of the hero. In Scotland and England his impassioned eloquence awoke all who heard him to a sense of their duty to the heathen. His address to the General Assembly aroused a "tumult of emotions," and in it he fully justified the course he had adopted for giving success to the missionary enterprise and achieving the Christianization of India. The assembly was spell-bound while the great missionary expounded his method for overthrowing Hindooism by the combined agencies of a sacred education and of the Bible. The result of his visit was that the income for missions increased fourteen fold in five years, the best men of the other colleges volunteered for mission work. Scotland was roused and pledged to aggressive work in the foreign field. The esteem in which he was held was shown by his having conferred on him the degree of D.D. by Aberdeen University before he returned to India.

When the disruption took place in Scotland, as Duff and those associated with him joined the Free church, new buildings for college, school and church purposes had to be secured. The munificence of those in Calcutta, who were interested in religious work was so princely, and the support of the church at home so heartening, that any difficulties were quickly overcome, and the work proceeded almost as if there had been no breach. During the years that followed much opposition was encountered, threats of maltreatment and even assassination were made. To all such Duff's reply, spoken and written, was "It is our resolute purpose, by the blessing of God, to persevere."

When Dr. Chalmers passed away in 1847 Duff was asked to take his place. "For the sake of the heathen, and especially the people of India, let me cling all my days to the missionary cause," was the answer he gave. The sorts and conditions of men in India were so impressed by the nobility of his refusal, that a fresh impetus was given to the work so dear to his heart.

Before accepting the invitation to re-visit Scotland in 18 0, he visited other parts of India, making careful notes of all he saw, with a view to establishment of missions in the several places he passed through. His visit to the Mother country enabled him to develop and organize missionary effort in Great Britain. The year after he reached Scotland he was Moderator of the General Assembly. At this time he journeyed to the United States and Canada, doing there

what he had already done in Great Britain. It was the middle of October, 1855, before he and his wife left for India the third time.

Within two years after their arrival the terrible Indian Mutiny broke out. Then, as before and after, Duff's words were "But my hope is in the God of Providence." Workers fell but the work went on. When Dr. Duff founded his system in Calcutta there were, as a result of a century's evangelizing on this old method in South India, not more than 27,000 native Christian Protestants in the whole peninsula, and the adjoining lands of Ceylon and Burmah. By 1850 a census shows that the number had become 127,000. When the anarchy of Islam and Brahmanism were let loose in 1857, there cannot have been more than 150,000. Since the mutiny and because of the mutiny the Church of India, now indigenous and self-developing as well as fostered by foreign overseers, has become mighty in numbers and in strength. At the end of 1871 the census showed 518,368, an increase of 6-10 per cent. by birth and accretions.

Dr. Duff's mission had never been so prosperous, spiritually and educationally, as in the mutiny year. When in 18 8 the Maharajah of Gwalior, with the Governor-General, visited the college, the Maharajah's surprise was unbounded at finding 1200 boys, voluntary students in this institution, that he was informed was supported wholly by private Christian benevolence. If Christians could do that the Maharajah of Gwalior thought he could not afford to be behind them. Such an incident is proof of the importance of maintaining in a state of efficiency, and on a scale of magnitude fitted to attract strangers to it, such an institution as that over which Dr. Duff presided.

Death and disease made the year 1859-60 a hard one for the mission. Several were called away, and although the mission was reinforced by younger men, the addition to the burden laid on Mr. Duff, himself fast aging from 30 years of toil, was too heavy. In 18 3, as in 1847, the cry reached Dr. Duff from Scotland "Come home to save the missions." He was neither moved by committee nor General Assembly until his old enemy dysentery laid hold of him, then he was forced to return. Almost every class and creed in Bengal opposed his going away, but despite the willingness of Duff's spirit to remain, the flesh was altogether too weak.

The work of this man was recognized by the endowment of Scholarships in the University; two of the colleges procured oil portraits of their benefactor; his own students, Christian and not Christian, placed a marble bust of their teacher in their college; a few of the Scottish merchants of India, Singapore and China, offering him £11,000—the capital of this sum being destined for the invalid missionaries of his church. On the interest of this sum he lived, refusing all the emoluments of the offices he held. The only personal gift which he was constrained to accept was a home in Edinburgh, which the Scottish merchants insisted on purchasing for him.

In Scotland he received an enthusiastic welcome; he was appointed convener of the Foreign Missions Committee. A chair of evangelistic theology was established, and Dr. Duff was appointed Professor. In 1873 he was appointed, for the second time, Moderator of the General Assembly. Then in the interests of the India he loved, he was enabled to labor until, Feb. 12th, 1878, he was called to rest from his labors.

When he left India for the last time Bishop Cotton said of him that his name might well be honored in all churches since he arrived in the midst of a great intellectual movement of a completely atheistic character and at once resolved to make that character Christian; and that the work he did in India could never be undone, unless they whom he had left behind were faithless to his example.

In Duff's own address to his students when he left there, he said that the only befitting epitaph for his tombstone would be "Here lies Alexander Duff, by nature and practice a sinful creature, but saved by grace through faith in the blood and righteousness of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By

(Continued on page 685.)